

## Attachment B2: Materials for Testing (Ashkenazi Jewish Women with a Family History)

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ELANA: My mom had breast cancer and tested positive for a BRCA mutation, so I knew that my risk of inheriting the mutation and developing breast or ovarian cancer was increased.

Because I am an Ashkenazi Jewish woman, I'm ten times more likely to have a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation than the general population.



ELANA: At my last check up, I discussed my family history with my doctor and whether BRCA testing was right for me. She referred me to a genetic counselor to learn more.



ELANA: I wanted to make sure I had all the information to make decisions about my health and my future. I decided to get tested and I'm BRCA negative.



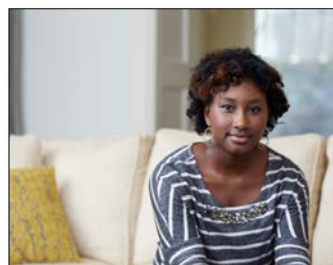
NARRATOR: Learning your family history of cancer could save your life. Visit [CDC.gov/BringYourBrave](http://CDC.gov/BringYourBrave) for more information.

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JACKIE: Learning about your family history can help you know if your chances for getting breast cancer at a young age are higher than average.



JACKIE: At first I thought it would be hard to talk to my family about their cancer history, but when I explained that I wanted to learn more so that I could protect myself and my future children, my family shared their personal experiences.

I am at an increased risk because my aunt was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 37.



JACKIE: It's time to talk about breast cancer risk. If you have a family history of breast cancer, make sure to tell your doctor and ask how you can manage your risk.



NARRATOR: Visit [CDC.gov/BringYourBrave](http://CDC.gov/BringYourBrave) for more information.

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LAUREN: When I was 28, I found a lump in my right breast.

Something about it didn't feel right to me, so I made an appointment with my doctor. It was scary to think that I could have breast cancer, but my family and friends were there to support me.

The good news is that it wasn't cancer... and the experience empowered me to take a more active role in managing my health.

My doctor talked to me about ways to lower my risk for developing breast cancer in the future. I try to eat more fruits and vegetables and get in a few hours of exercise every week. I also learned that breastfeeding my children could help reduce my risk.



LAUREN: Know how your breasts normally look and feel. If you have any signs that worry you, report them to your doctor right away.

NARRATOR: Visit [CDC.gov/BringYourBrave](http://CDC.gov/BringYourBrave) for more information.

1. **Everyone has BRCA genes.** BRCA stands for BReast CAncer. There are two BRCA genes—BRCA1 and BRCA2. When functioning normally, these genes help the body prevent cancer. They help keep breast, ovarian, and other types of cells from growing and dividing too rapidly or in an uncontrolled way.
2. **A BRCA gene mutation increases cancer risk.** When certain changes or “mutations” in the BRCA genes occur, cells are more likely to divide and change rapidly, which can lead to developing cancer. Only about 5–10% of breast cancers diagnosed in the United States are associated with BRCA mutations. However, women with a BRCA mutation face a 60–87% lifetime risk for breast cancer—much higher than the general population.
3. **BRCA gene mutations can come from your mother or father.** Many people believe that only mothers can pass down BRCA gene mutations to their children, but this is not true. You can inherit a mutation from either of your parents. If one of your parents carries a BRCA gene mutation, you have a 50% chance of also having the mutation.
4. **Some people are at increased risk for a BRCA gene mutation.** You may be at increased risk for a mutation if your family history includes any of the following: multiple relatives with breast cancer; any relatives with ovarian cancer; relatives diagnosed with breast cancer before age 50; a relative with cancer in both breasts; a relative who had both breast and ovarian cancers; a male relative with breast cancer; relative with a known BRCA gene mutation; or Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry (Central or Eastern European) and any relative with breast or ovarian cancer. Ashkenazi Jewish women are ten times more likely to have a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation than the general population.
5. **Only a genetic test can confirm a BRCA mutation.** The only way to know for certain if you have a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation is to have a genetic test. You should meet with a trained genetic expert to determine if testing is right for you and if you decided to get testing, to receive counseling prior to testing. Most people do not need genetic testing.



Knowing your BRCA gene mutation risk can save your life. Talk to your doctor to see if genetic counseling and testing are right for you.



## BREAST CANCER IN YOUNG WOMEN

Cancer is a disease in which cells in the body grow out of control. When cancer starts in the breast, it is called breast cancer. Except for skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common cancer in American women.

Most breast cancers are found in women who are 50 and older, but breast cancer also affects younger women. About 11% of all new cases of breast cancer in the United States are found in women younger than 45 years of age. While breast cancer diagnosis and treatment are difficult for women of any age, younger women may find this experience overwhelming.



### WHO HAS A HIGHER RISK?

Some young women are at a higher risk for getting breast cancer at an early age compared with other women their age. If you are a woman younger than age 45, you may have a higher risk if—

- You have close relatives who were diagnosed with breast or ovarian cancer (particularly at age 45 or younger).
- You have changes in certain breast cancer genes (BRCA1 and BRCA2).
- You are of Ashkenazi Jewish heritage.
- You were treated with radiation therapy to the breast or chest in childhood or early adulthood.
- You have had breast cancer or other breast health problems such as lobular carcinoma in situ (LCIS), ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), atypical ductal hyperplasia, or atypical lobular hyperplasia.



If you think you are at higher risk, talk to your doctor. Your doctor may refer you to a genetic counselor, recommend that you get screened earlier and more frequently, and consider medicines or surgeries that can lower your risk.

You have an average risk of getting breast cancer at a young age if the risk factors listed don't apply to you. If you are at average risk, it is important for you to know how your breasts normally look and feel. Talk to your doctor if you notice any changes in your breasts. Aside from genetics, little is known about what causes breast cancer in women younger than 45 years of age.



## WHAT CAN I DO TO **REDUCE MY RISK OF BREAST CANCER?**

Many factors can influence your breast cancer risk, and most women who develop breast cancer do not have any known risk factors or a history of the disease in their families. However, you can help lower your risk of breast cancer in the following ways—

- Keep a healthy weight.
- Exercise regularly (at least four hours a week).
- Don't drink alcohol, or limit alcoholic drinks to no more than one per day.
- Avoid exposure to chemicals that can cause cancer (carcinogens).
- Try to reduce your exposure to radiation during medical tests like mammograms, X-rays, CT scans, and PET scans.
- If you are taking, or have been told to take, hormone replacement therapy or oral contraceptives (birth control pills), ask your doctor about the risks and find out if it is right|for you.
- Breastfeed your babies, if possible.

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### More Information

[www.cdc.gov/BringYourBrave](http://www.cdc.gov/BringYourBrave) | Facebook: CDCBreastCancer Twitter: @CDC\_Cancer  
(800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) | TTY: (888) 232-6348



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